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## Botanical Notes.

*Volvox globator*.—Mr. J. Levick maintains\* that while the idea that the pretty little microscopic alga, *Volvox globator*, is hollow has passed as so self-evident as scarcely to have been challenged, "it is easy for microscopical students to demonstrate for themselves the certainty that those charming little globes are not hollow, but solid."

\* \* \* "A little experiment, which it is easy for every one to try, shows that *Volvox* is without any cavity whatever, and that the perfectly transparent contents of the globe appear to possess little, if any, less firmness than the pellicle or membrane which forms its periphery. This may be shown by taking *Volvox* in good quantity and straining the water from them; by this means a little mass may be obtained. Let the *Volvoxes* thus collected be taken up rather roughly by means of a syringe and placed in water containing carmine or any fine solid matter. It will probably be found that some of the *Volvoxes* have been broken, some perhaps even into fragments which still display rolling motion. Now, if a little care is used in examining the ruptured specimens, it will be seen that the carmine adheres to any surface thus exposed, at once displaying the fact of their solid consistency." \* \* \* "*Solid* is too strong a word, perhaps, to apply to matter which cannot be more than gelatinous, and is here used only in antagonism to the word *hollow*; but, if the spheres be stripped of their outer green covering, this envelope collapses, while the contents retain their spherical form, as is readily seen by the displacement of the carmine."

Mr. Levick also cut sections from the frozen plant and found that the internal matter, whatever it was, had sufficient density to support particles of carmine, dirt, or any other solid matter which lodged upon it.

*A wingless-fruited Ptelea*.—In a recent winter trip into Lower California, as far as Todos-Santos Bay, Dr. Parry discovered a new species of *Ptelea*, which was quite similar in habit and general appearance to the common northern *P. angustifolia*, but remarkably distinct in possessing wingless fruit, thus making a slight modification of the characters of the genus necessary. Dr. Parry has named the plant *P. aptera*.

*The Rhododendron and Poisonous Honey of Pontus*.—Mr. A. Nesbitt doubts in the *Gardeners' Chronicle* the oft-repeated assertion that honey made from the flowers of *Rhododendron Ponticum* is poisonous, and even that the plant itself is so. He says that he has observed lambs eating a small quantity of the leaves either of *T. Ponticum* or hybrids of that plant and no bad results followed. He suggests that it is possible that as the flower of the oleander is more like a rose than the rhododendron, it is probable that the former was the plant from which the honey was obtained that poisoned Xenophon's soldiers, the oleander being well known to be poisonous.

The Rev. C. Wolley Dod contributes to the same journal an interesting note which throws some light upon this point. He remarks

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\**Rep. and Trans.* Birm. Nat. Hist. and Micr. Soc., 1882, after *Journal Roy. Micro. Soc.*, Dec., 1883.

that there were apparently two kinds of poisonous honey met with in Pontus, one found near Heracles and the other near Trebizond, the former being attributed by Pliny to a plant called "ægolethon" or goat's-bane, the other to a plant which both he and Dioscorides called "rhododendron;" but they also used the name "nerium" for it. Sibthorp has identified the latter as *Nerium Oleander*. Mr. Dod can find no direct evidence that *Rhododendron Ponticum* is poisonous; but *Azalea Pontica*, which occurs in profusion near Trebizond, about ten miles from the coast, he believes to possess poisonous properties similar to those attributed to *Kalmia latifolia*. It is a noteworthy fact, if correct, that no species of *Rhododendron* is known to be poisonous, while members of certain of the other Ericaceous genera, *Azalea*, *Kalmia*, *Andromeda* and *Ledum*, possess either poisonous or narcotic properties.

*The Name Fishberries*, which has long been applied to the fruit of *Cocculus Indicus* (*Menispermum Cocculus*, L.) because of its use in stupefying and capturing fish, is, according to Prof. James Hyatt, given to the drupes of *Prunus Caroliniana* in Tennessee, where they are locally used as a fish poison. It appears that the amount of hydrocyanic acid that this fruit contains is sufficient to poison the fish which swallow it, without rendering their flesh unsafe for food.

#### Botanical Literature.

*Genera Pyrenomycetum schematice delineata.* By P. A. Saccardo.

This latest work of the well known Italian mycologist consists of 14 lithographic plates, large 8vo, on which are delineated the 280 genera into which the Pyrenomycetes are divided in the system of classification adopted in the two volumes of the *Sylloge* by the same author. The figures, though not claiming artistic perfection, are good and answer well the end for which they were intended. They give, in fact, "a bird's eye view" of this vast family of fungi and may be considered as indispensable both to the amateur and the critical student of mycology. The low price of the work (6 francs) places it within the reach of all.—J. B. E.

*Botanical Micro-Chemistry: an Introduction to the Study of Vegetable Histology*, prepared for the use of students by V. A. Poulsen, translated with the assistance of the author and considerably enlarged by William Trelease, Professor in the University of Wisconsin. 12mo. Boston: S. E. Cassino & Co., 1884.

There has been considerable interest taken in this country for a few years past in the microscopic examination of plants, and the number of botanists who are turning their attention to the study of vegetable histology is gradually increasing. Although all the necessary apparatus for prosecuting this fascinating study has been easily procurable at moderate prices, there has hitherto been sadly needed some sort of a manual which should give the beginner directions how to proceed in the examination of the minute anatomy of tissues, while it should at the same time contain everything of importance that more advanced students might desire to be informed upon. This want has at length been supplied in the work before us, which, first